

" I do not know what is thought in Paris of this protest which has brought me some very kind letters from my *confreres*, but it has stupefied me. I do not know those young men. They do not belong to my *entourage*, they have never sat at my table, they are not my friends. If they are disciples of mine — and remember I do not seek to make disciples — they are so without my knowledge. Why then do they repudiate me ? The situation is original. It is as if a woman with whom a man never had any intercourse were to write him: ' I have had quite enough of you, let us separate !' The man would certainly reply to that: ' It's all one to me.' Well, the position is very similar.

" If friends of mine, if Maupassant, Huysmans, and Ce'ard, had addressed me in such language publicly, I should certainly have felt somewhat offended. But this declaration can have no such effect on me. I shall make no answer to it at all. . . . It would be giving importance to a matter which has none. When I am fighting a theatrical battle I write an open letter to Sarcey because Sarcey certainly exercises great authority. In some literary discussions I have written in a similar way to Albert Wolff, because he is an old *chroniqueur* to whom people listen. But whatever may be my feelings towards the five gentlemen who have signed the document we are speaking of, they must excuse me if I don't answer, for I have nothing to say to them. . . . One thing I cannot understand is why these young men should pass themselves off as soldiers of mine deserting my flag. The only one I know a very, very little is Bonnetain, whose '

Opium' I have read, and
whose talent I esteem. He once called on
me; and when he
appeared before the Tribunal of
Correctional Police, after 'Chariot
s'amuse,' he wrote asking me to let him
have a letter to be read in
court. I sent him one, but I advised him
not to use it, for the
judges, I fancy, hold me in slight esteem.
Well, I met Bonnetain
again at Daudet's, at the * Sapho' dinner,
and that is all! . . .
The comical part of the affair is that
people used to reproach
me with what they called 'my tail,' They
were willing to tolerate
what I wrote, but they refused to accept
the productions of the